

Q: I don't feel the Shoppette operating hours are conducive to "serving the best customers in the world" who are working flight line hours.

It is disheartening that our mid-shifters are locked out and forced to go off base during a rare break in the action. It has been noticed that you have also experienced this when pulling up to the Shoppette prior to ORE training day on a Saturday only to see the doors locked shut 10 mere minutes prior to opening. I also have to wonder how far off our moral compass is askew when we even the gas pumps have a lock on them after hours even though the pump service payment is automated.

Perhaps, AAFES could better spend some of the kickback funds they use to continue their "freedom from competition" to perhaps restore service to those that are the tip of the spear and truly put "bombs on target".

A: Unfortunately, there's not enough business outside the current hours to keep them open longer--the hours match the demand. As you mention, sometimes this is inconvenient for any of us but it's the nature of providing this service. As for the automated fuel pumps, pumps 1 and 2 are open all the time.

Q: As a mother of both school age children and a toddler, I enjoy and appreciate the bus system. It allows me to not have to wake my toddler and rush to drop the other children off at school. My only concern is that my elementary students are hearing conversations between high schoolers that are not appropriate. Is there any way that the bus drivers could sit the elementary students in the front and high school students in the back? Thank you again for providing this service for base families!!!

The contract does not require the bus company to seat children by grade or age. However, it does state drivers are responsible for reporting to the school disruptive or unacceptable behavior. Therefore, if your children hear, see, or experience disruptive or unacceptable behavior, they may report it to the driver so he or she can take the appropriate action. Realistically though, the type of activity you describe is not likely controllable.

Q: As a female military member (both during my earlier years as an airman and my current status as an NCO) I have attended a good number of events every year to support esprit de corps. These included dining outs, rewards breakfasts, rewards dinners, ALS graduations, etc. However, I do not usually attend events that are not specifically related to my job (wing awards, formals, etc) --primarily because I am not allowed to go in anything other than my uniform. I am proud of my uniform; I am proud of my service, and I am proud to show both. But I have never served with a woman who, when asked, said that she would prefer to wear her uniform to an "Air Force Ball" type of event.

Perhaps a section within the wing that is capable of doing so could create a poll for opinions on this subject (i.e. holding several formals/events a year that, while work-related, have a civilian attire option for military members) from both male military members as well as female military members. I would not wish to make a fellow member uncomfortable and if the poll returned that the opinions I have heard expressed from members that I have served with as

well as my own are in the minority, then I would of course wish to comply with the majority's feelings. I just do know if/when it has been addressed.

I know commanders care about the welfare of their people, and like to consider their opinions when they have time to. If there is a forum for commander/first sergeant consideration on issues such as this, and it is not a subject that has been previously discussed, I would very much appreciate your consideration. I hope the matter is not too trivial; thank you for your time.

Commanders don't just care about our people when time allows--they consider our Airmen all the time. Nor do commanders take polls, votes, or focus groups to make decisions--they do the right things for the right reasons whether it's popular or not. Wearing the uniform for official functions is an easy one. Anyone who wants to host a different social event at Dakotas to have fun or build community should pursue it, and can set the ground rules for their event.

Q: If (according to AFI40-102.2) the Air Force prohibits smoking and the use of smokeless products in the workplace, why do I see so many Airmen using tobacco on the base? My child and I come to the commissary and we walk through a smoke screen to get inside. I don't want my child to see so many of his "heroes" using tobacco and then he thinks it's OK. Can you please do something to address this issue?

The image and health effects of tobacco aren't good. That said, it's not banned outdoors--only indoors.

Q: I currently live in the Centennial housing, I called housing to clear up a couple questions I had about the upcoming cost of rent to stay there. They informed me that they are trying to make the rent equivalent to an A1C BAH. I have noticed that there are a lot of SSgt's and above living in those houses. I don't understand how it is fair that they are to be charged the same amount as an A1C's BAH when it is obvious that they make a lot more than we do. So it seems to me that just because someone is lower ranking that we are not going to be able to put money in our pockets like the higher ranking. I am a single mom and I struggle to make ends meet I know a couple extra hundred dollars would help me. So maybe there is a way that could be worked out that everyone saves in the end or if we make more we should pay more. I just wanted to know what your thoughts are regarding this issue. Thank you for your time sir.

While Hunt may charge whatever rent they choose for their homes, they've indicated they intend to offer homes at two rates for you to choose from--a market rate, or a small percentage below your BAH (with utilities included). We're working hard with them to get those rates to you in the next two months. Just like Dakota Ridge, we want you to have information well in advance to have plenty of time to make your decisions.

Q: Sir, due to the work day on October 11 for the ORI, we have heard that November 8 will be a down day. Would it be possible to change the comp day to Nov 12 instead to include Veteran's Day and allow Team Ellsworth to enjoy a 4-day weekend? Thank you for your time and consideration.

No. WG/CCs do not have the authority to authorize a four day pass (which is what this would be).

Q: I'm doing research on tobacco use (smokeless and smoke producing) in and around government facilities and on military installations. Can you please provide me with the current policies in effect on Ellsworth, to include Workplace, Government Housing, Recreation Facilities, and Dormitories? I found the publication from Col. Vander Hamm's time here, but would like to know if there have been any changes since Col. Taliaferro took command.

There have been no changes to this policy.